

NOVEMBER 8, 2001

VETERANS DAY, THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The veterans of this country have given so much to protect and secure our way of life. Now more than ever, it is our duty to commemorate their actions, and to commend their commitment.

I wish to thank our veterans for having the courage and strength to fight for American values. Though we are saddened by recent events, we can look to the valiant history of our nations' bravest for comfort. We can rest assured that the dream of America is worth fighting, dying, and living for. We know because from every corner of the earth, the down trodden, the disenfranchised, and the oppressed come to seek out this dream. We know America is the beacon of hope and change, we can see it in the diversity of our citizenry.

On September 11, 2001, a generation blanketed by the quilt of peace and tranquillity was awakened. This quilt of peace, stitched with the blood, sweat, and tears of brave American soldiers, was torn in a manner unimaginable only two months ago. Today, a generation comforted by a freedom so deep, so common, so prevalent, and so easily taken for granted, can more easily identify the price for which it was paid.

This generation is reminded that the sacrifice of Americans made our way of life possible. Young Americans with dreams in their eyes and hope in their hearts, bought our freedom. The tears of families who lost loved ones were exchanged for our security. The peace that we have come to know was purchased by men and women that so loved our country that they risked and often gave their lives-ensuring that freedom is not only a concept that we dream about, but a reality that we live.

So it is with gratitude and the utmost respect that we remember those who fought, and those who were lost for the love of our nation. We move forward more vigilant, more aware, and more determined. As we pay tribute to our nation's freedom fighters, we stand with a new pride in America. Our hopes and prayers go out to those who are deployed, even now, to carry the torch in the fight for freedom. At the dawning of a new day of uncertainty, we can look to the American values of freedom, justice, and equality to lead us to peace. We thank the countless heroes, our veterans, for giving their freedom and their lives, so that we may live free.